

REMARKS

Claims presented for prosecution in this application are claims 1, 4-11 and 17, claim 18 being newly canceled by the present amendment. Claims 1, 4-11 and 17 have been allowed over the cited prior art of record. Claim 18 has been rejected over cited prior art. In view of Applicant's remarks below, Applicant respectfully submits that remaining claims 1, 4-11 and 17 continue to be in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection to the newly canceled claim 18 be withdrawn, and that the case now be passed to issue.

General Comments

Applicant's Representative wishes to thank Examiner Johnson for the courtesies extended during the recent telephonic conference held on September 8, 2004.

Although no agreement was reached with respect to the lone outstanding rejection of claim 18, Applicant's Representative appreciates the time and consideration of Examiner Johnson in discussing the same.

Allowance of Claims 1, 4-11 and 17

The Examiner's substantive consideration and allowance of claims 1, 4-11 and 17 continues to be gratefully acknowledged.

The 35 USC 102(b) Rejection of Claim 18 over Jolidon, Hochstrate and Tuma

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-2 and 9-11 as being anticipated by Jolidon, Hochstrate and Tuma. Applicants continue to respectfully assert that none of the cited prior art references disclose, at least, each and every aspect of independent claim 18.

In particular, Applicant asserts that claim 18 had specifically recited that Applicant's 'access port' was defined in that portion of the slide housing that extended

longitudinally and substantially parallel to the direction of movement of the slide. That is, Applicant continues to believe that claim 18 clearly delineated over the hammer-openings in the cited prior art slide elements.

As noted in a previous Office Action, Toma's (and, in fact, all of the cited prior art devices cited by the Examiner) 'aperture' is formed, "in the rear of the slide". Applicant submits that the specific language of claim 18 precluded such an interpretation by explicitly reciting that the slide housing, in which the access port is formed, '*extends longitudinally and substantially parallel to a direction of movement of said slide*'. As is clearly evident, the rear of the cited prior art slides, in which the Examiner's 'access port' is formed, do not extend either longitudinally, nor in a direction which is substantially *parallel to* the direction of movement of their respective slides.

The Examiner has stated that, "[t]he fact that the rear of Tuma et al. does not extend in a longitudinally parallel direction *is not at issue*" (emphasis added). While Applicant clearly does not agree with the Examiner's analysis in this regard, believing that it is *precisely* the issue given the specific claim language of claim 18, Applicants have canceled claim 18 from the present application merely in the interests of advancing prosecution.

In consideration of the cancellation of claim 18, Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the outstanding rejection of claim 18 now be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

In view of the remarks above, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1, 4-11 and 17 are allowable, and an early action to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Applicant submits that the present Amendment After Final is responsive to each of the points raised by the Examiner and contains no new matter. Further, Applicant believes that the present Amendment is merely formal in nature, removes all outstanding issues under consideration and place the case in condition for allowance. Applicant further believes the present Amendment was necessitated by the outstanding Final Office Action, claim 18 being believed to be allowable.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the number below to expedite resolution of any issues that the Examiner may consider to remain unresolved. In particular, should a Notice of Allowance not be forthcoming, the Examiner is requested to phone the undersigned for a telephonic interview, Examiner's amendment, or the like, while the outstanding issues are fresh in the mind of the Examiner.

It is believed that no additional fees or deficiencies in fees are owed apart from the One-Month Extension of Time, for which authorization is given to charge our Deposit Account No.13-0235. However, authorization is hereby also given to charge our Deposit Account No.13-0235 in the event any additional fees are owed.

Respectfully submitted,

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